

Amendments to the Claims

Claim 1 (Currently amended): A hog farrowing system for use in cold environments, the farrowing system comprising:

a farrowing building providing protection from weather elements;

a plurality of farrowing boxes within the farrowing building said farrowing boxes having an entrance to permit free choice ingress and egress of female hogs and restrain piglets;

an alley outside the farrowing boxes for the female hogs to defecate, urinate, and move;

feed and water stations outside the farrowing boxes.

Claim 2 (Original): The farrowing system of claim 1 wherein the farrowing building is not heated.

Claim 3 (Original): The farrowing system of claim 2 wherein the farrowing building is not insulated.

Claim 4 (Original): The farrowing system of claim 1 wherein the farrowing building is a hoop barn.

Claim 5 (Original): The farrowing system of claim 1 wherein the farrowing building is a pole barn.

Claim 6 (Original): The farrowing system of claim 1 wherein the farrowing boxes are insulated.

Claim 7 (Original): The farrowing system of claim 6 wherein the farrowing boxes further comprises a heat system.

Claim 8 (Original): The farrowing system of claim 7 wherein the heat system is for each of the farrowing boxes and comprises two 250W heat lamps.

Claim 9 (Original): The farrowing system of claim 7 wherein heat from the heat system is located opposite the entrance to permit the female hog to lay facing the entrance and give birth to the piglets near the heat.

Claim 10 (Original): The farrowing system of claim 1 wherein the farrowing boxes have a removeable door to permit free ingress and egress of piglets to defecate, urinate, and move to the feed and water stations.

Claim 11 (Original): The farrowing system of claim 10 wherein the farrowing boxes have a roller located over the removeable door to prevent bruising on the female hogs large pre-farrowing underline and udder.

Claim 12 (Original): The farrowing system of claim 1 further comprising limestone bedding under the farrowing boxes.

Claim 13 (Original): The farrowing system of claim 12 wherein the farrowing boxes have an open bottom and are placed directly upon the limestone bedding.

Claim 14 (Original): The farrowing system of claim 13 wherein straw bedding is placed within the farrowing boxes to permit the female hog to build a nest within a center location of the farrowing box.

Claim 15 (Original): The farrowing system of claim 14 wherein the farrowing box further comprises anti-crushing boards and a creep area placed away from the nest to prevent the female hog from crushing the piglets.

Claim 16 (Original): The farrowing system of claim 15 wherein the farrowing box provides approximately 42 square feet per female hog and her piglets.

Claim 17 (Original): The farrowing system of claim 1 further comprising limestone spread in the alley as a disinfectant and barrier to pathogens in the floor.

Claim 18 (Original): The farrowing system of claim 17 wherein the alley is approximately 6 feet wide.

Claim 19 (Original): The farrowing system of claim 17 further comprising a ring to be placed in the female hog's snout to prevent rooting in the alley.

Claim 20 (Original): The farrowing system of claim 1 wherein the feed and water stations are in a common location in the farrowing building.

Claim 21 (Original): The farrowing system of claim 20 wherein the feed and water stations are in a farrowing building location approximately 12 feet wide.

Claim 22 (Withdrawn): A hog farrowing box for use within a farrowing building in cold environments, the farrowing box comprising:
a front, back and sides attached together defining an inner chamber, open top and a bottom;
a heat system within the inner chamber;
the front having an entrance to permit free ingress and egress of a female hog and restrain piglets;
bedding on the bottom permitting the female hogs to nest;
insulation covering the open top.

Claim 23 (Withdrawn): The farrowing box of claim 22 wherein the heat system comprises two heat lamps.

Claim 24 (Withdrawn): The farrowing box of claim 23 wherein each heat lamp is approximately 250W.

Claim 25 (Withdrawn): The farrowing box of claim 22 wherein heat from the heat system is located opposite the entrance to permit the female hog to lay facing the opening and give birth to the piglets near the heat.

Claim 26 (Withdrawn): The farrowing box of claim 22 wherein the entrance has a removeable door to permit free ingress and egress of piglets to defecate, urinate, and move to the feed and water stations after the piglets are approximately 14 days old.

Claim 27 (Withdrawn): The farrowing box of claim 22 wherein the entrance has a roller positioned to prevent bruising on the female hog's large pre-farrowing underline and udder.

Claim 28 (Withdrawn): The farrowing box of claim 22 wherein the bedding is hog rootable limestone.

Claim 29 (Withdrawn): The farrowing box of claim 28 wherein the limestone is shell and bone builder dry limestone adapted to insulate the female hog and piglets from a cold floor and keep the inner chamber dry.

Claim 30 (Withdrawn): The farrowing box of claim 29 wherein the shell and bone builder dry limestone is an approximately 4 inch layer.

Claim 31 (Withdrawn): The farrowing box of claim 29 wherein the bedding is agricultural lime adapted to act as a disinfectant and barrier to pathogens in the floor.

Claim 32 (Withdrawn): The farrowing box of claim 31 wherein the agricultural lime is Ag Lime #3.

Claim 33 (Withdrawn): The farrowing box of claim 31 wherein the agricultural lime is an approximately 1/2 inch layer.

Claim 34 (Withdrawn): The farrowing box of claim 33 wherein the agricultural lime is placed under a 4 inch layer of shell and bone builder dry limestone.

Claim 35 (Withdrawn): The farrowing box of claim 22 wherein the bedding is stem straw placed within the inner chamber to permit the female hogs to build a nest within a center location of the farrowing box.

Claim 36 (Withdrawn): The farrowing box of claim 35 wherein the stem straw is placed over hog rootable limestone.

Claim 37 (Withdrawn): The farrowing box of claim 22 wherein the farrowing box further comprises anti-crushing boards and a creep area placed away from the nest in the center location to prevent the female hog from crushing the piglets.

Claim 38 (Withdrawn): The farrowing box of claim 37 wherein the farrowing box provides approximately 42 square feet per female hog and piglets.

Claim 39 (Withdrawn): The farrowing box of claim 22 further comprising rods extending from each side of the entrance to the back, the rods placed close enough to the bottom to permit the female hog to straddle the rods and turn around, the rods positioned to prevent two female hogs from lying within the inner chamber together.

Claim 40 (Withdrawn): The farrowing box of claim 32 wherein the rods are moveable between a nesting position and a nursing position.

Claim 41 (Withdrawn): The farrowing box of claim 22 wherein the insulation is a styrofoam panel heat loss barrier.

Claim 42 (Withdrawn): The farrowing box of claim 41 further comprising a clear plastic vapor barrier.

Claim 43 (Withdrawn): The farrowing box of claim 42 wherein the vapor barrier is approximately 6 ml plastic.

Claim 44 (Withdrawn): The farrowing box of claim 22 further comprising an insulative gate covering the entrance.

Claim 45 (Withdrawn): The farrowing box of claim 44 wherein the insulative gate is carpeting.

Claim 46 (Withdrawn): The farrowing box of claim 44 wherein the insulative gate has overlapping plastic sections.

Claim 47 (Withdrawn): The farrowing box of claim 22 further comprising a center brace adapted to be gripped by a front end loader and lifted.

Claim 48 (Withdrawn): A method of farrowing hogs in cold environments within a building utilizing a plurality of heated and insulated farrowing boxes which permit unrestricted female hog movement and promote natural mothering instincts by the female hog, the method comprising:

providing a pregnant female hog for each of the farrowing boxes approximately 24 hours before the female hog gives birth to piglets;

providing an alley outside the farrowing box for the female hog to defecate, urinate, and move;

providing a feed and water stations outside the farrowing boxes.

promoting the female hog to root in bedding provided inside the farrowing box and build a centrally located nest in the farrowing box as opposed to an alley of the building;

promoting the female hog to give birth to piglets close to a heat source;

protecting the piglets from crushing by use of a creep area, anti-crush boards, and anti-crush rods.

Claim 49 (Withdrawn): The method of claim 48 further comprising the step permitting unrestricted piglet movement after approximately fourteen days such that the mothering female hog may teach the piglets to defecate, urinate, eat, and drink outside the farrowing box.

Claim 50 (Withdrawn): The method of claim 49 further comprising the step weaning the piglets at approximately six weeks by removing the female hogs.

Claim 51 (Withdrawn): The method of claim 50 further comprising the step removing the piglets from the building at approximately eight weeks.

Claim 52 (Withdrawn): The method of claim 51 wherein the piglets are between 50-55 lbs in weight and can be marketed as feeder pigs.

Claim 53 (Withdrawn): The method of claim 51 further comprising the step removing the nesting boxes, the nesting boxes having an open bottom permitting the bedding to remain in the building.

Claim 54 (Withdrawn): The method of claim 53 wherein the step removing the farrowing boxes is performed with a front end loader tractor.

Claim 55 (Withdrawn): The method of claim 54 further comprising the step cleaning the building of the bedding.

Claim 56 (Withdrawn): The method of claim 56 further comprising spreading limestone bedding over the building floor and replacing the farrowing boxes.

Claim 57 (Withdrawn): The method of claim 48 further comprising utilizing a once-bred gilt system to permit bringing the female hog to market as a market hog.

Claim 58 (Withdrawn): The method of claim 48 wherein the heat source maintains a minimum 70°F temperature in the creep area and a minimum 50°F in the centrally located nest.

Claim 59 (Withdrawn): The method of claim 48 further comprising the step modifying the farrowing box for warm environments by reducing the heat and insulation.

Claim 60 (Withdrawn): A hog farrowing box comprising:
a front, back and sides attached together defining an inner nesting chamber;
rods extending from the front to the back, the rods placed close enough to the bottom to permit the female hog to straddle the rods and turn around, the rods positioned to prevent two female hogs from lying within the inner chamber together.

Claim 61 (Withdrawn): The hog farrowing box of claim 60 further comprising an entrance on the front to permit free ingress and egress of a female hog and restrain piglets.

Claim 62 (Withdrawn): The hog farrowing box of claim 61 further comprising a door at the entrance that can be removed to permit free ingress and egress of the piglets.

Claim 63 (Withdrawn): The hog farrowing box of claim 61 further comprising a roller positioned at the entrance to prevent bruising on the female hog's large pre-farrowing underline and udder.

Claim 64 (Withdrawn): The farrowing box of claim 60 wherein the rods are moveable between a nesting position where the rods are positioned wide to not obstruct the female hog from preparing a nest and a nursing position to prevent two female hogs from lying within the inner chamber together.

Claim 65 (Withdrawn): A hog farrowing box comprising:
a front, back and sides attached together defining an inner nesting chamber;
an entrance on the front to permit free ingress and egress of a female hog and restrain piglets;

a roller positioned at the entrance to prevent bruising on the female hog's large pre-farrowing underline and udder.

Claim 66 (New): The hog farrowing system of claim 1 wherein said plurality of farrowing boxes each have crossbar crusher rods moveable between a nesting position when the rods are extended outward to permit the prefarrowing female hog to build a nest without obstructions of the rods and a nursing position wherein the rods are moved to parallel relationship such that only one female hog may lay in a farrowing box at a time to nurse her piglets.

Claim 67 (New): The hog farrowing system of claim 1 wherein each farrowing box has a thermostat sensor to keep temperature control for said farrowing box at all times.

REMARKS

Claim 1 has been amended to emphasize a feature of the invention, essential to the operation of the system, namely that the farrowing boxes have an entrance to permit free choice ingress and egress of female hogs while restraining the piglets. This feature is lacking from the primary reference used to reject claims 1-5, 10, 20 and 21, namely Grootheest. Grootheest simply has a gate 6 of conventional construction, not meeting the structural description or function shown in amended claim 1. Since no reference suggests individually or in combination the limitations of amended claim 1 it is submitted that it and all claims dependent from it are now *prima facie* in condition for allowance.

The feature presented in amended claim 1 is in the original disclosure and not new matter, see e.g., page 5, lines 10-15 and page 8 of the Specification, as well as original claim 1, all emphasizing free ingress and egress of the sow.

Applicant has added claim 66 emphasizing the desirable crossbar feature which permits only one sow per farrowing box and which prevents the sow from lying on piglets and crushing them. This feature is too not shown by any of the art of record. Claim 67 relates to individual nesting box temperature control, also not shown in the art.

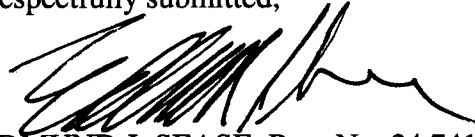
With respect to the Examiner's rejection of claims showing pole buildings or hoop barns, the Applicant is not saying they were the first to invent a pole building or hoop barn. Instead Applicant asserts they are the first to invent a farrowing system that uses a hoop building or pole barn of the type shown in combination with the other features of the system defined in amended claim 1.

Please charge Deposit Account No. 26-0084 the amount of \$50.00 for two additional claims over 20 (\$25 each). No other fees or extensions of time are believed to be due in

connection with this amendment; however, consider this a request for any extension inadvertently omitted, and charge any additional fees to Deposit Account No. 26-0084.

Reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Edmund J. Sease', written over a series of horizontal lines.

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